**World Geography**

**Mrs. Ryan**

**Teacher Notes – Chapter 8, Lesson 1: Brazil’s Physical Features**

**WATERWAYS AND LANDFORMS**

1. **Amazon River** – A natural resource. It begins in the Andes of Peru and flows east to the Atlantic Ocean. It is the largest river in the Western Hemisphere and the world’s second longest, after the Nile River in Africa. It carries more freshwater than any other river in the world. Its depth allows ships to travel more than 2,000 miles inland.
2. The **Amazon Basin** is a huge wet lowlands area drained by the Amazon River, which has more than a thousand **tributaries** feeding into it. Much of the Amazon Basin is covered by the world’s largest rain forest.
3. The **Amazon Rainforest**, a warm woodland that receives a great deal of rain each year, has tall evergreen trees that form a **canopy**, or an umbrella-like covering. The Amazon Rainforest is called a **Selva** and is home to several million kinds of plants, insects, birds, and other animals.
4. The **Brazilian Highlands** are made up of rolling hills, high plateaus, and low mountain ranges. They are divided into western and eastern parts. The western part is grassland. Farming and ranching are the major economic activities. The Mato Grosso Plateau extends into Bolivia and Peru. Low mountain ranges form much of the eastern Brazilian Highlands. Highland plateaus plunge into the Atlantic coast, forming **escarpments**, or steep slopes. These escarpments have delayed development of inland areas. To encourage settlement in the inland area, Brazil’s capital was moved to Brasília (1950). Sao Paulo (600 miles south) is the largest city in the Southern Hemisphere. It is located on a plateau at the highland’s eastern edge, just 30 miles from the Atlantic coast. Farther south are grassy, treeless plains called **pampas**. The fertile soil make the pampas one of Brazil’s most productive ranching and farming areas.
5. The **Atlantic Lowlands** is a long coastal plain between the Brazilian Highlands and the Atlantic Ocean. It is 125 miles wide in the north and becomes narrower in the southeast. The rural part of this region is an important area for farming. The city of **Rio de Janeiro**, Brazil’s second- largest city, has beautiful beaches and a vibrant lifestyle. It is Brazil’s cultural tourist center.

CLIMATES

1. **Tropical rain forest climate:** warm and wet. Daytime temperatures average in the 80s. Feels hotter because the wet rain forest makes the air humid.
2. **tropical monsoon**: monsoon winds that bring a lot of rain and flooding. Also has a dry season when forest fires occur.
3. **tropical wet/dry** - wet summer (40-70 in. of rain), 70 degrees dry winter (almost no rain), 60 degrees.
4. **semiarid -** hottest, driest part of Brazil reaches 100°F in summer frequent droughts.
5. **humid subtropical** - varied temperatures, warm, humid summers, mild winters, rainfall year round some snow in the southern parts.

RESOURCES

1. **Abundant Forests**: Mahogany, rubber, nuts, and medicinal plants**.** Logging, mining, and other development have become a major environmental issue – deforestation. The rate of deforestation has declined in recent years.
2. **Mining**: Minerals - iron ore, tin, copper, bauxite, gold, and manganese, petroleum, and natural gas**.**
3. **Major crops**: Coffee, sugarcane tropical fruits, soybeans, corn, and cotton. Brazil is a leading exporter of coffee, oranges, soybeans, and cassava.